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United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Continuation Sheet

Section number 1

Hardy Bridge
Cascade County, Montana

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United States Department of the Interior
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National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

Historic name Hardy Bridge

Other names/site number 24CA389

2. Location

street & number Milepost 6 on Old US Highway 91 (Recreation Road)

☐ not for publication

city of town 11 miles south of Cascade

☒ vicinity

State Montana code MT county Cascade code 013 zip code 59421

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide ___ local

Signature of certifying official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official

Date

Title

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:)

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

(Check as many boxes as apply)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Local |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | public - State |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | public - Federal |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | private |

Category of Property

(Check only **one** box)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | district |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | site |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | structure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | object |

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		sites
1		structures
		Objects
		buildings
1	0	Total

Name of related multiple property listing

(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

Montana's Historic Steel Truss Bridges

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular) =

Bridge

Current Functions

(Enter categories from instructions)

TRANSPORTATION/Road-related (vehicular) =

Bridge

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7. Description

Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions)

OTHER: Warren through truss

Materials

(Enter categories from instructions)

foundation: Concrete

walls:

roof:

other: Steel, Concrete

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Hardy Bridge crosses the Missouri River and a branch line of the Great Northern Railway in a spectacular canyon on old US Highway 91 about 11 miles south of the community of Cascade. It is a 3-span riveted Warren through truss structure that is 550-feet in length and 21-feet wide. The bridge is located at its original site and the setting has not been significantly diminished by residential growth since its construction. The bridge retains all of its original features and functions in much the same capacity it did while on the primary north-south route in Montana. The bridge was bypassed by Interstate 15 in 1968.

Narrative Description

The Hardy Bridge is located in the Missouri River Canyon of central Montana. The bridge crosses the upper Missouri River about eleven miles south of Cascade at the rural community of Hardy within the Adel Mountains. It is located near the confluence of the river and Hardy Creek. The canyon is dominated by igneous formations that extruded as part of a volcanic pile 50-75 million years ago. The river winds its way through spectacular volcanic formations that Meriwether Lewis called "nearly perpendicular rocks . . . of great height [sic]" when the Corps of Discovery passed through the canyon

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in July 1805. The area is dominated primarily by dwellings that are occupied by both full time residents and also by part time visitors to the area who come to the canyon for its scenery and recreational opportunities. Because of the constricted nature of the canyon, local economic activity is based on recreation and cattle grazing. The bridge carries the Recreation Road (old US Highway 91) across the Missouri River. Although bypassed by Interstate 15 in 1968, it continues to provide a crossing for local residents and the hordes of anglers, rafters, and hunters who utilize this area.¹

The Hardy Bridge is a 3-span riveted Warren through truss structure with a reinforced concrete T-beam approach span. Two of the truss spans cross the Missouri River, while the third crosses the Great Northern Railway's Montana Central Railroad. The bridge is 550-feet in length and 21-feet wide with a roadway width of 20-feet. The superstructure consists of two 198-foot (8 panels on each side of each span) steel truss spans and a 120-foot (6 panels on each side) steel truss span. The approach span is 25-feet in length. The substructure consists of three reinforced concrete pier. Two of the piers are columnar with concrete web walls. The central river pier is columnar with a concrete web wall resting atop a flared solid concrete pier. The abutments are also reinforced concrete and stepped at the endwalls to accommodate the bridge ends and the cast steel rocker bearings.

The sloping upper chords of each of the three truss spans consists of continuous steel plate riveted to the top flanges of two laced channel sections with batten plates, while the lower chords are paired channel sections with batten plates. Vertical and diagonal members are steel channel sections. Portal braces are laced channel sections with gusset plates at the connection points. The top struts are laced angle sections. The sway braces are angel sections with gusset plates and the top lateral braces are laced angle sections. Horizontal sway braces are bolted midway on the inside of the truss spans; the braces are comprised of laced angle sections. The deck is supported by five lines of steel I-beam stringers resting on 19 steel I-beam floor beams. Bottom lateral braces consist are angle sections. The stringers support a concrete slab deck flanked by raised concrete curbs and steel lattice-type guardrails bolted to the vertical posts and anchored to the flared reinforced concrete endposts at the ends of the bridge.

There 23-foot reinforced concrete T-beam approach span connects the bridge to the riverbank on the east end of the structure. It consists of 4 lines of concrete girders with the ends resting on the east abutment and the nearest river pier. The concrete deck of the approach span is flanked by the steel lattice-type guardrails.

Integrity

Other than routine maintenance, there have been no substantial changes to the Hardy Bridge since its construction in 1931. The bridge is the standard riveted steel Warren through truss designed and built by the Montana State Highway Department between 1915 and 1933. Bridge engineers adapted this particular design to cross not only the Missouri River, but also a branch line of the Great Northern Railway. All of the structural components and features common to the design are present on the bridge and are unchanged. The bridge retains its distinctive truss configuration, simple angle section guardrails, and original concrete deck. The setting of the bridge site has not significantly changed. The surrounding area is still used for agricultural and recreational purposes. The Hardy Bridge retains all its essential elements of design, workmanship, and materials. It appears and functions as it did in 1931 as an important crossing of the Missouri River in central Montana.

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply)

Property is:

- ☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ B removed from its original location.
- ☐ C a birthplace or grave.
- ☐ D a cemetery.
- ☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- ☐ F a commemorative property.
- ☐ G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance

(Enter categories from instructions)

Engineering

Transportation

Period of Significance

1931-1959

Significant Dates

1931

Significant Person

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder

Montana Highway Department

Angus McGuire and Evarts Blakeslee

Period of Significance (justification)

The Period of Significance includes the construction of the bridge and its subsequent function as an important component of US Highway 91 in central Montana.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph (provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria)

The Hardy Bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places under Criteria A and C. The bridge is eligible under Criterion A because of its association with the development and improvement of Montana's highway infrastructure just prior to the beginning of Franklin Roosevelt's federal relief programs in 1933. The bridge was the culmination of the Montana Highway Department's multi-span Warren through truss construction program on major Federal Aid highways. It marks the most up-to-date design of the time and includes the most modern technology and materials available. The bridge was a component of the recently established US Highway 91 alignment through the Missouri River Canyon between Great Falls and Helena. The setting of the site has not changed substantially since its construction and the approach roads leading to it area representative of early 1930s road design standards. The bridge has not been altered since its construction and all of its original components, materials, and fabric are intact and unchanged. It is an excellent representative example of a pre-continuous through span bridge. The setting of the bridge is also largely intact and the bridge, while it no longer serves in an interstate capacity, is still an important component on a local farm-to-market and recreational access road.

Narrative Statement of Significance (provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance)

The Hardy Bridge is significant under Criterion A for its association with the Great Depression, its location on a newly designated highway, and as the culmination of the Montana Highway Department's program to construct Warren through trusses at important river crossings. The bridge was constructed with federal funds allocated for the project before the full effects of the national economic depression hit the United States and Montana. Consequently, no federal emergency relief funds were expended on the project and it was one of the last major bridge projects undertaken by the department before the depression significantly curtailed its programs. The bridge was also an important component of a new highway that was constructed between Helena and Great Falls. Designated a part of US Highway 91, it did not exist ten years before the bridge was built. The bridge is located on the direct route between the two cities and also provided a better access between the Anaconda Company smelter in Great Falls and the Butte mines. The road wound its way through the spectacular Missouri River Canyon and the bridge is an important part of one of the most scenic drives in Montana. The roadway leading to the bridge is on its historic alignment and has not been changed since its construction in 1931. The bridge also marks the culmination of the Montana Highway Department's program to construct substantial bridges at significant river crossings. It was one of the last major standard Warren through trusses built in the state before the more substantial continuous span through trusses became the standard for river crossings like this one.² Ultimately, the bridge facilitated traffic on what would become a strategic highway during World War II as it provided a connection between the Butte mines, Helena, and the copper refinery and military airbase at Great Falls.

The Hardy Bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion C because it is a stunning and intact example of the type of standardized Warren through truss spans built by the Montana Highway Department from 1930 to 1933. Warren through trusses had been the standard river crossing utilized by the highway department since 1915. The Hardy Bridge represents the culmination of that multi-span design before continuous through spans assumed that function. The design was particularly adaptable to different crossing conditions, were easy to build, and were relatively inexpensive when compared to the more massive Pennsylvania and continuous spans. There have been no structural modifications made to the bridge and vehicular collisions have not significantly damaged any important structural components. The bridge retains its historic appearance and configuration with all of its original structural components and features intact along with its association with US Highway 91 and the highway department's construction of the road to provide a more direct route between Helena and Great Falls. The setting of the bridge is also intact and the structure still functions as an important crossing on what is now a recreational access route and farm-to-market road.

Engineering Significance

The Hardy Bridge is the culmination of the Montana Highway Department's program to build multi-span Warren through trusses at major river crossings on the Federal Aid highway system. The program had begun in 1915 when the design was standardized and first utilized that year in western Montana. The Hardy Bridge represents the best of the design and incorporates the latest available technology. Two years after this bridge was built, the highway department began using continuous span through trusses at wide river crossings like this one. The bridge retains all of its original structural components, features, and historic appearance. It is one of the last Warren through trusses of this design built in Montana.

Developmental history/additional historic context information (if appropriate)

On July 16, 1930, the Montana State Highway Commission awarded a contract to the Great Falls-based McGuire and Blakeslee Company to construct a steel and concrete bridge across the Missouri River and Great Northern Railway tracks near Hardy in Cascade County. This bridge and the Missouri River bridge near Wolf Creek (24LC131) were parts of a major project by the state highway department to build a new road (US Highway 91) between Great Falls and Helena. Angus McGuire and Evarts Blakeslee were veteran bridge-builders in Montana and they won the contract with a low bid of \$112,993.05. They contracted with the Minneapolis Steel & Machinery Division of the Minneapolis-Moline Power Implement Company to fabricate the structural steel components needed for the bridge. As with most Montana bridge projects, the Ideal Cement Company plant in Trident supplied the cement for the piers, deck, and approach span. The Carnegie Steel Company of Homestead, Pennsylvania provided the reinforcing steel for the concrete. The Great Northern Railway Company contributed \$6,750 to off-set the cost of the span crossing its tracks. McGuire and Blakeslee completed the bridge in 1931. Interstate 15 bypassed the Hardy Bridge in 1968, but it continues to carry traffic over the Missouri River and railroad tracks for local residents and recreationalists. In 1987, the bridge appeared in the Paramount film, "The Untouchables," where it functioned as a border crossing between the United States and Canada and was the scene of a pitched gun battle between Eliot Ness and the Untouchables and rumrunners employed by Chicago mobster Al Capone.³

Evarts H. "Blake" Blakeslee and Angus McGuire

Born in 1883 in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, Evarts H. "Blake" Blakeslee was long associated with the Montana State Highway Commission (SHC), both as an employee and as an independent contractor. After obtaining a degree in engineering from the University of Wisconsin about 1906, Blakeslee relocated to the Bitterroot Valley of western Montana in 1906 or 1907. There, he worked as a surveyor and contractor on the Bitterroot Valley Irrigation District, a reclamation project designed to promote the cultivation of apple orchards in the valley. After the Apple Boom collapsed in 1917, Blakeslee removed to Helena, Montana and began work as a Resident Engineer for the Montana Highway Department in 1918. Between 1915 and 1926, the Commission assigned Resident Engineers to supervise the construction of large bridge projects in the state. In 1919, the Commission assigned Blakeslee to supervise the construction of the First Avenue North and Tenth Street (24CA308) bridge projects in Great Falls. New job opportunities in the Electric City, however, compelled Blakeslee to permanently relocate to Great Falls after the bridge projects were completed in 1921. He resigned from the highway department in 1921 and began work as an independent bridge contractor. Blakeslee's experience with the use of reinforced concrete on the two Great Falls bridges had a profound impact on his subsequent career as an independent contractor.⁴

While still employed by the SHC in 1920, Blakeslee purchased the seven truss spans of the old First Avenue North Bridge in Great Falls for use at other sites. By 1922, he had gone into business with Angus J. McGuire. A native of Scotland, McGuire emigrated to the United States sometime before 1910. He met Blakeslee in the Bitterroot Valley when both were employed on the irrigation project. McGuire relocated to Great Falls around 1921 and went into business with Blakeslee. The McGuire and Blakeslee company hit the ground running in 1922; that year, the SHC awarded them contracts to build a bridge in the Gallatin Canyon south of Bozeman and paved one-half mile of city street in Glendive with a roller leased from the State Highway Commission. The Belt Creek Bridge was the third project awarded to the men after the formation of the company. These three projects established McGuire and Blakeslee as reliable contractors who completed their projects by the deadline specified in the contracts. Between 1921 and 1933 when McGuire left the company, the men built bridges throughout Montana and Wyoming, including the Yellowstone River at Glendive (24DW290) in 1926 and the Missouri River at the community of Hardy in 1931. Both structures were (and continue to be) substantial through truss bridges. For the most part, however, the company built small reinforced concrete slab and T-beam bridges. In 1933, McGuire left Montana for parts unknown.⁵

From 1933 until 1936, Blakeslee was in partnership with Anaconda Copper Mining Company employee Robert Boomer. The company operated under the name of Boomer & Blakeslee. The company built bridges on U.S. Highway 91 between Great Falls and Helena, including the Sheep Creek Bridge (24LC1157) in 1934 and the Prewitt Creek Bridge (24CA642) in 1931. In 1936, Blakeslee dissolved his association with Robert Boomer and formed a partnership with Great Falls area rancher Thomas Staunton to construct road and bridge projects in Montana. The partnership endured as Staunton & Blakeslee until about 1945 when Staunton retired to devote full-time to his cattle ranch. In all his incarnations, Blakeslee was best known for his knowledge and use of reinforced concrete for bridge construction. After the Second World War ended in 1945, Blakeslee formed the Utility Builders Company, a family business that specialized in the construction of curbs, gutters, and pavement in the Great Falls area. Blakeslee remained active in the business until his death in October, 1967 at the age of 84.⁶

Endnotes

1. David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman, *Roadside Geology of Montana*, (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991), 274-275; Gary E. Moulton, ed., *The Definitive Journals of Lewis & Clark: From Fort Mandan to Three Forks*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2002), 394.
2. Built in 1933, the first continuous span through truss structure, the Missouri River Bridge northeast of Wolf Creek (24LC131), is also located on US Highway 91 about 30 miles south of the Hardy Bridge.
3. Montana State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes, Book 4, 361 (16 July 1930); Federal Aid Project No. 172-C, Unit 2, Montana Highway Department Bridge Bureau Records, 1920-1985, Unprocessed Collection, Montana Historical Society Research Center, Helena.
4. "Great Falls Contractor E. H. Blakeslee Dies," *Great Falls Tribune*, 18 October 1967; Robert Blakeslee Interview by Mitzi Rossillon, 3 March 1992; *Polk Directory for Helena and Lewis and Clark County*, (Helena: R.L. Polk, 1918); *Water Resources Survey: Ravalli County, Montana*, (Helena: State Engineers Office 1958), 45.
5. There is no record of McGuire in Montana after his departure from Great Falls in the U.S. Census Records. "\$6842 Offered for Iron in Old Bridge Across Missouri," *Great Falls Tribune*, 11 September 1920; *Polk Directory for Great Falls*, (Great Falls: R.L. Polk, 1918-1967); *Third Biennial Report State Highway Commission of Montana, 1921-1922*, (Helena: State Highway Commission, 1923), 54-55, 56-57, 58-59, 62; Butte City Directories, 1900 – 1921; "T. Staunton, Rancher and Businessman, Dies," *Great Falls Tribune*, 9 April 1956.
6. Although Boomer had formed a partnership with Blakeslee in 1933, he kept his job at the Anaconda Company plant in Great Falls throughout the period he was associated with Blakeslee. "Great Falls Contractor," *Great Falls Tribune*, 18 October 1967; Blakeslee Interview; *Great Falls City Directories 1949-1967*; "T Staunton," 9 April 1956.

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography (Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
☐ previously listed in the National Register
☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☐ State Historic Preservation Office
☐ Other State agency
☐ Federal agency
☐ Local government
☐ University
☐ Other
Name of repository: _____

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 2

(do not include previously listed resource acreage)

UTM References

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

1 12 436800 5223820
Zone Easting Northing

3 _____
Zone Easting Northing

2 _____
Zone Easting Northing

4 _____
Zone Easting Northing

Verbal Boundary Description (describe the boundaries of the property)

The boundary for the Hardy Bridge is a rectangle 550 x 25 feet. The rectangle encompasses the bridge and its approaches on both sides of the Missouri River. The boundary is centered on the bridge.

Boundary Justification (explain why the boundaries were selected)

Boundaries for the Hardy Bridge are drawn to encompass the four spans of the bridge, its immediate approaches and that portion of the Missouri River spanned by the bridge. The width is increased beyond the measurements of the structure to include the piers and abutments.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Jon Axline/Historian

organization Montana Department of Transportation

date May 13, 2009

street & number 2701 Prospect Avenue

telephone (406) 444-6258

city or town Helena

state MT

zip code 59620-1001

e-mail jaxline@mt.gov

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive black and white photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property:

City or Vicinity:

County:

State:

Photographer:

Date Photographed:

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of ____.

Hardy Bridge
Name of Property

Cascade County, Montana
County and State

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, PO Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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County and State Cascade County, Montana

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Bibliography

Alt, David Alt and Donald W. Hyndman. *Roadside Geology of Montana*. (Missoula: Mountain Press Publishing, 1991).

Axline, Jon. *Conveniences Sorely Needed: Montana's Historic Highway Bridges, 1860-1956*. (Helena: Montana Historical Society, 2005).

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Montana State Highway Commission Meeting Minutes. Book 4. Montana Department of Transportation, Helena.

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Robert Blakeslee Interview by Mitzi Rossillon, 3 March 1992

"\$6842 Offered for Iron in Old Bridge Across the Missouri." *Great Falls Tribune*, 11 September 1920.

"T. Staunton, Rancher and Businessman, Dies." *Great Falls Tribune*, 9 April 1956.

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Water Resources Survey: Ravalli County, Montana. (Helena: State Engineers Office 1958).

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County and State Cascade County, Montana

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Name: Hardy Bridge (24CA389)
County and State: Cascade County, Montana
Photographer: Unknown
Date of Photograph: 1931
Location of original negative: Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.
Description and view of camera: Hardy Bridge under construction. View to the northeast.
Photograph: 0001

Name: Hardy Bridge (24LC389)
County and State: Lewis and Clark County, Montana
Photographer: Kristi Hager
Date of Photograph: June 2005
Location of original negative: Montana Department of Transportation. Helena, Montana.
Description and view of camera: North profile of truss spans and west portal. View to the east.
Photograph: 0002

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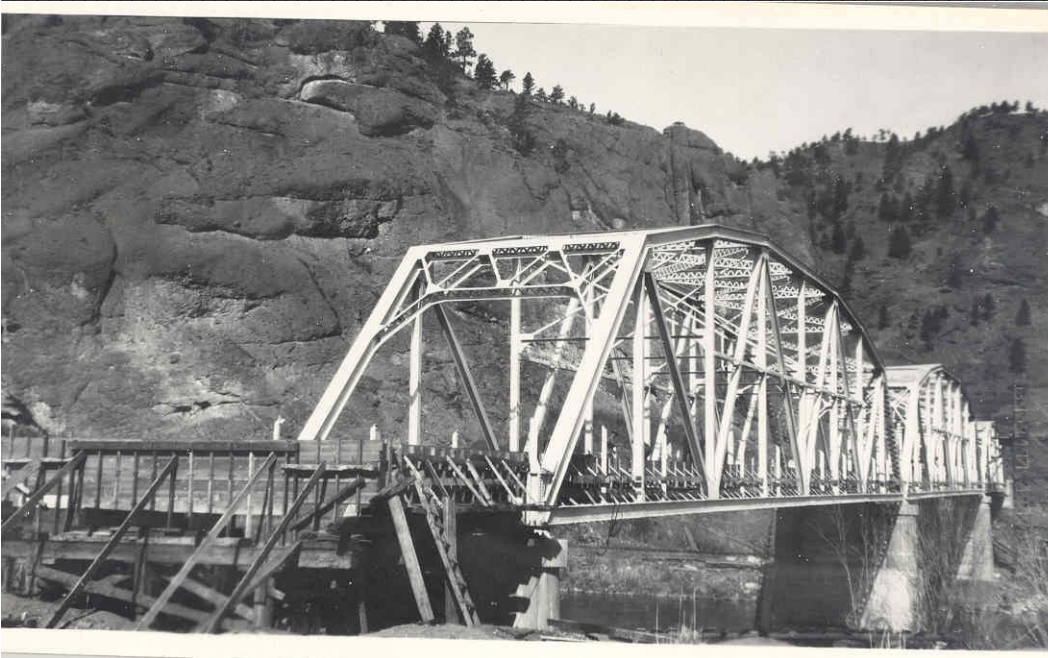
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Photograph 0001. Hardy Bridge under construction. View to the northeast.

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Photograph 0002. Hardy Bridge. North profile and west portal. View to the east.